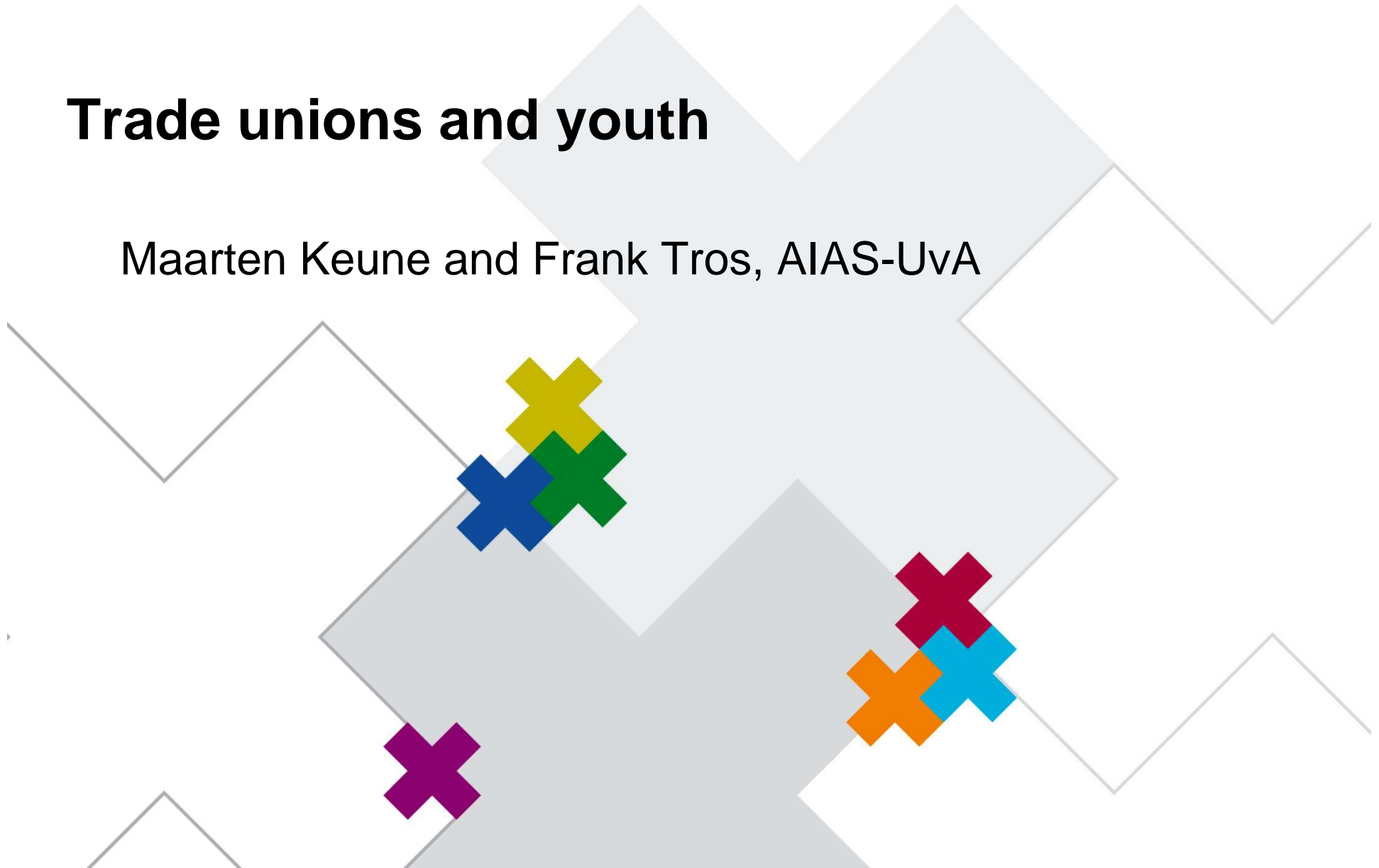




Trade unions and youth

Maarten Keune and Frank Tros, AIAS-UvA





Rationale study

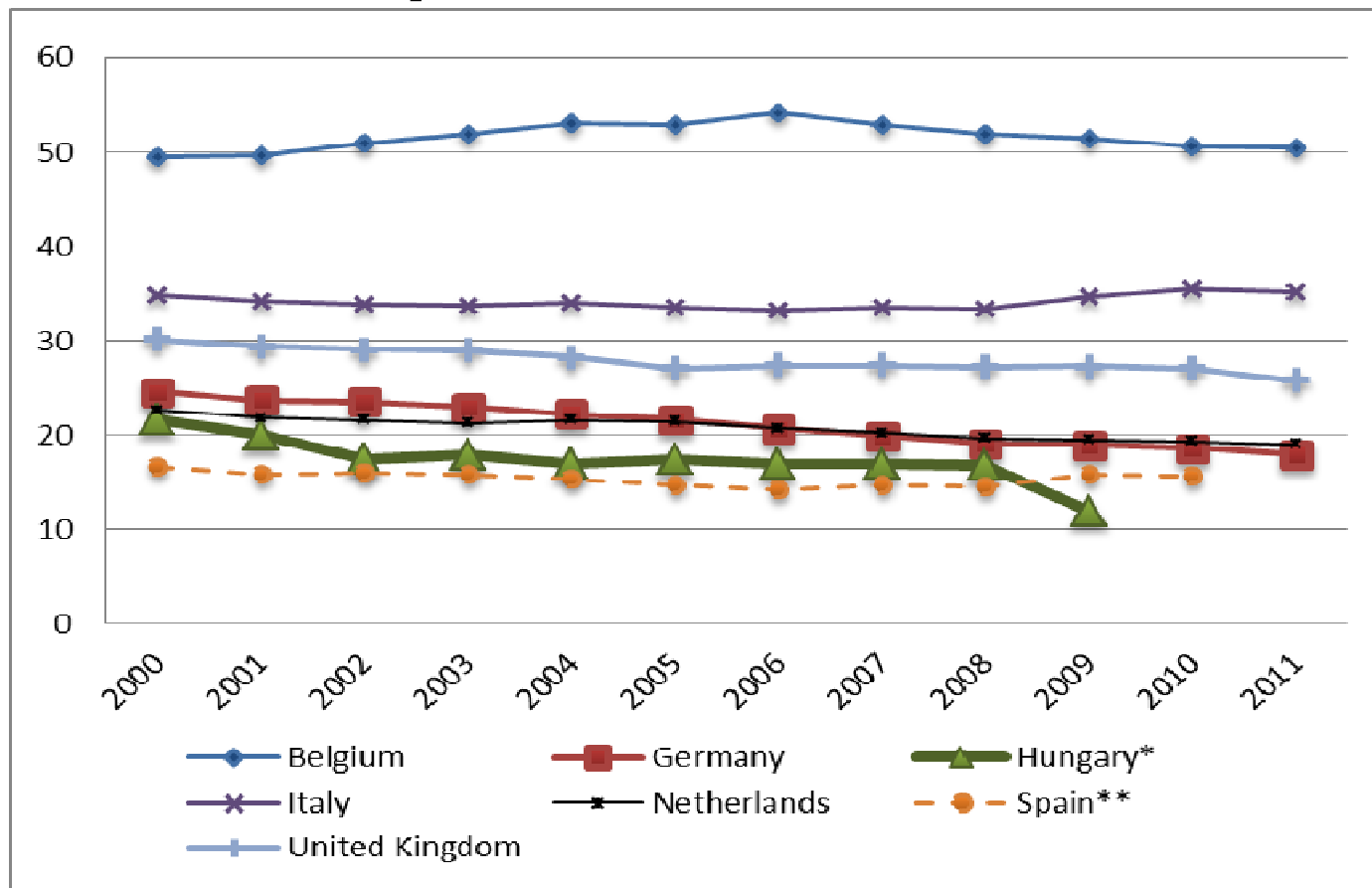
- In most countries decline union membership in general and youth membership in particular. Often argued youth is hard to organise.
- But:
 - Youth most vulnerable on labour market (UE, flex, low wage) can benefit from union representation
 - Studies show that youth not negative on unions and unsatisfied demand for trade unionism
 - Cases with counter trends
- Understand developments: why and how? What factors hinder or support youth membership?



Research project

- 7 countries: BE, DE, HU, IT, NL, UK, ES
 - Labour market position youth (pres Francesca)
 - Developments in membership
 - Obstacles
 - Union strategies, policies, initiatives towards youth
-
- 7 national studies, one comparative study
 - Financed by DG Employment

Developments overall union membership 2000-2011





Youth membership: mixed developments

- In most countries clearly below overall levels. Two exceptions:
- Belgium: steady close to adult rate, and even increasing slightly
- Germany: decline until 2004 to 9%, then recovery to almost 20% today
- → youth membership does not have to be low or to decline

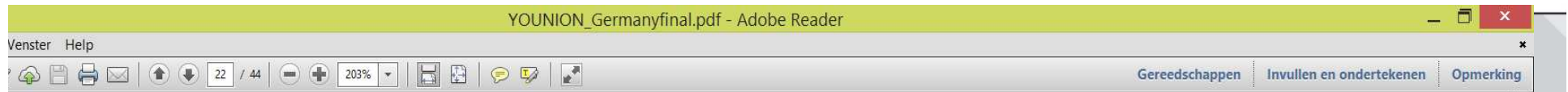
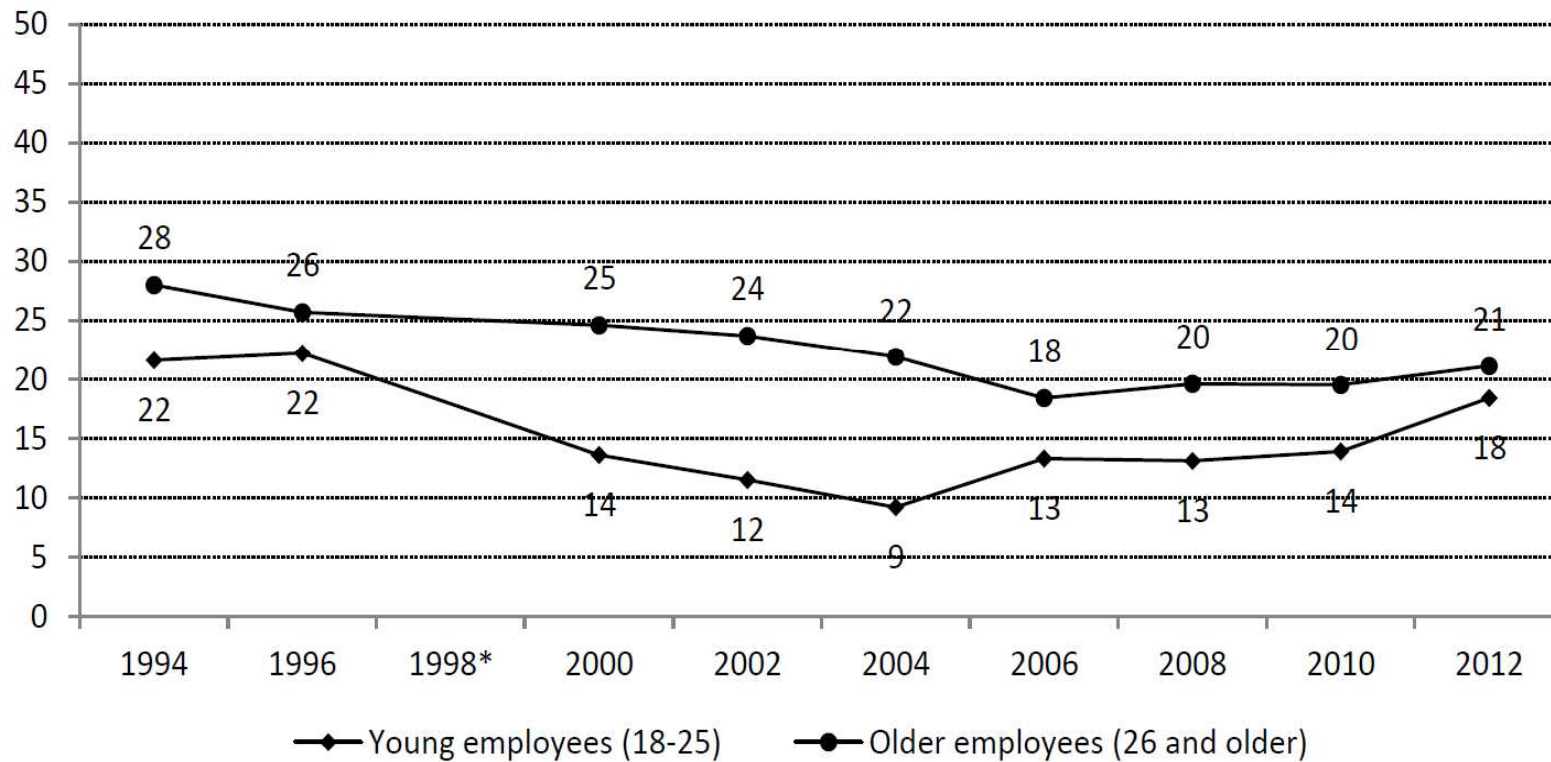


Figure 7: Development of union membership among young and other employees (percentages)



Source: ALLBUS, own calculations



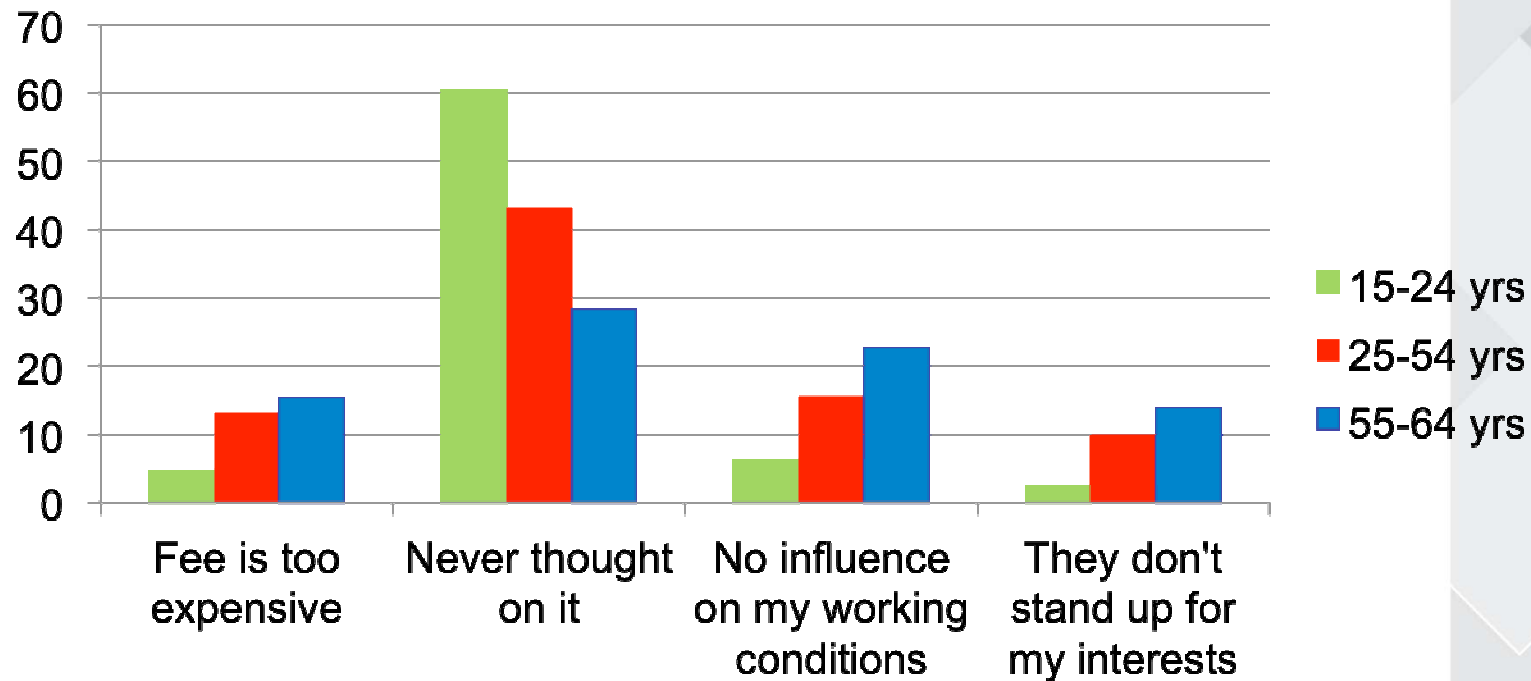
Difficulties in organising youth

- Structural factors: precarious jobs, short contracts, work in least organised sectors, diversity youth
- Lack of knowledge about unions among youth
- Limited interest and resources dedicated by unions (e.g. ES, NL, HU, UK)
- Difficulty for youth to integrate in unions (structures, internal democracy)

- Not lack of interest in union issues
- Not lack of social engagement young people (except HU?)



Reasons non-membership trade unions by age groups in Netherlands 2011 (N=16.998)





Strategies

- Specific approaches for specific labour market entry trajectories (DE)
- Youth unions accross sectors or at sector level (e.g. NL)
- Create young image, social media
- Organising



Lessons

- Face-to-face contacts crucial
- Make union achievements for youth transparent
- Adjust to different youth groups
- Offer inclusive union structures
- Offer influence on union policy
- Develop career possibilities for young activists



To discuss today: how to strengthen youth membership?

- How to approach youth?
- How to adapt union strategies?
- How to adapt union structures, democracy?
- Good examples?